

THE
LEARNING AND INSPIRATION
OF
THE APOSTLES.

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DISSERTATION
ON THE
LEARNING AND INSPIRATION
OF
THE APOSTLES.



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BY WILLIAM JESSE, M.A.
CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL OF GLASGOW.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

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DISSERTATION

ON THE

LEARNING AND INSPIRATION

OF

THE ARTIST



BY WILLIAM JESSE M.A.

ORIGINATOR OF THE ART OF GLASS

LONDON

PRINTED FOR G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1857

TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

MY LORD,

THEY who discern the face of the times with an eye to God's providence in the government of his Church, clearly perceive, that the Clergy are under peculiar obligations to attempt a revival of Religion ; but Religion can never experience any considerable revival without a revival of Learning, and of that kind of learning which is appropriate to the Christian ministry. Though distinguished in the republic of letters by their eminence in every branch of polite literature, yet, without biblical learning, they cannot raise and support the *clerical* credit and character ; and, without this, they cannot produce any important reformation.

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The want of learning can never be compensated by enthusiasm. Its effects are partial and transient. They may be mistaken for a revival of religion; but are rather symptoms of an expiring church. The efforts of enthusiasm are like the violent and irregular pulsations of the heart in the natural body, when the chill of death ascends from the lower extremities, and approaches near the organs of vitality. Then it is the heart seems to exert all its energy to repel the enemy, and, if possible, to force the vital fluid to circulate once more through all the system. But these efforts are of short duration—they intermit—the enemy approaches nearer—the heart is oppressed—it ceases to beat—and, life expires.

Under this impression, of the importance of learning, and of the dangerous symptom of enthusiasm, the author wrote his Dissertation. If its merits might be estimated by the importance of the subject, and by the zeal and reverence with which it is presented to your notice, it would not be thought

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thought unworthy of your Lordship's acceptance and patronage.

The deep-laid scheme of Infidels, to banish Christianity from the world, has been revealed. Atheism has been avowed in the hearing of all Europe. But from whence these portentous events? The explosion was sudden; but the materials have been long accumulating. Bishop Warburton insisted that atheism is *a consequence* of extreme corruptions in religion. It follows, but never precedes, the most odious depravities in the ministers of religion; the superstitions, the hypocrisies, the divisions, the animosities, the disputes, the profane disorders of the church——Yet, the mystery of iniquity is not completed; and it becomes those, who have any light and zeal remaining in them, to stand between the porch and the altar *weeping*; and not only to pray, *Spare thy people, good Lord, spare them!* but to use their utmost endeavours to stop the progress of infidelity, and retard that awful crisis when the Gentile church shall have completed its apostacy and be broken off.

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You,

You, my Lord, have set the example. You have opposed yourself against those who are undermining the scriptures and endeavour to drive religion out of this country. The apparent effects of this zeal did not rest in you alone. The people pressed forward to hear their shepherd's voice—Persons of the first distinction were your auditors—Many of the clergy, young and old, learned from your example how they might best discharge their sacred office—Multitudes also of the inferior orders of society, tradesmen, artificers, and servants, hung upon the preacher with eager attention. Such a promiscuous assembly of princes and people, such a serious and attentive congregation, was seen when *Cbrysoftom* ascended the pulpit.

Your talents, my Lord, are happily suited to instruct the wise and the unwise, the learned and the ignorant. If it were not so, you would never have seen nobles, clergy, and artificers listening to your sermons with so much serious and devout attention. I hope it is no presumption in
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me to express my wishes, my hopes and prayers, that you may live to repeat these your pious labours ; and that your example will be imitated by some of those Learned Dignitaries, who are capable of becoming the glory and defence of the English Church !

If they think to discharge their duty by their pens, they will find themselves greatly mistaken. Publishing books and pamphlets, however excellent, will have little good effect on the generality of people, who have neither abilities nor time to read them: and very few of those learned infidels, against whom they principally direct their arguments, will condescend to look into their writings. Preaching popular discourses has ever been the great instrument of Providence to convert mankind. St. Paul preferred it, for its utility, before all miraculous gifts—He called it *Δυναμις Θεοῦ εἰς σωτηρίαν*.

You know, my Lord, there was a time when the office of preaching was attached to the episcopal dignity, and when Bishops

were in the habit of preaching * more frequently than Presbyters preach in our days —when they preached, not on rare and extraordinary occasions, and upon unpopular subjects, but whenever the people assembled in the churches, and upon subjects which interested all ranks of people, and were well understood by all that heard them. I wish it were so again !—that is, I wish the best means were used to save the church from utter apostacy, and the nation from atheism and democratic ruin.

I am, my Lord,

with profound reverence,

Your Lordship's

most obedient humble servant,

West Bromwich,
14th May 1798.

W. JESSE.

* Witness the Homilies of Chrysostom, Cyrill of Alexandria, and of Augustin.

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REFLECTING on the evils produced through a neglect of Theological Studies, the Author was led into an investigation of the Learning and Inspiration of the Apostles. He offers his thoughts to the Public upon this very important subject, in the following Dissertation.

In his attempt to oppose the pretensions of Enthusiasts, and to correct erroneous opinions of Inspiration, he may *seem* to deny inspiration in every sense and meaning in which the term is used. He therefore thinks it expedient to advertise his Readers, that he believes a divine influence and blessing accompany the means of grace, and are necessary to men's salvation ; and more particularly, that it is the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which, in the use of appointed means, illumines the mind and sanctifies the heart. He hopes, therefore, that he shall not alarm honest prejudices in favour of established forms of speaking, in those sober and pious Christians who have not affixed any unscriptural meaning to them.

THE
LEARNING AND INSPIRATION

OF
THE APOSTLES.

THE Apostles of JESUS CHRIST had an extraordinary mission, and an extraordinary work to perform. It became necessary to them, that they should be furnished with extraordinary means, to discharge their office, and to accomplish their work. They were commanded to wait for these means, before they entered upon their labours: *Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high*; which, surely, teaches this obvious truth, That no man was ever divinely commissioned, and called into actual service, to work in the Lord's vineyard, who has not sufficient abilities: and he that pretends to be inspired, and to have received an extraordinary call to the

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ministry,

ministry, having not sufficient abilities for the office, may not indeed be guilty of wilful lying, but most certainly is deceived.

It will be said, and it hath been said, by those who wish to shelter their ignorance and presumption under cover of example, that the Apostles were *fishermen*. It should however be remarked, that the learning and exercise of arts and trades were not inconsistent with a literary education, in the same degree as with us at this time. The Jews, whatever was their rank or fortune, generally instructed their children in some business or employment, by which they might support themselves: it was a proverb with them, *He that will not teach his son some art or trade, brings him up for the gallows*. St. Paul was, by occupation, a tent-maker; yet, he had the best learned education which his country could afford: he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the most renowned doctor of the age. Therefore it is in vain to allege that the Apostles were *fishermen*, unless it can be proved that all fishermen, in their days, were as unlearned as fishermen, taylor, shoemakers, weavers, nail-makers, &c. generally are in our times.

To this it may be replied, that, in *Acts* iv. 13. it is said of Peter and John, *They were unlearned and ignorant men*. But the imputation implies

no more than that they were not eminently learned, nor distinguished by their rank above the generality of their countrymen: they were not scribes: they were not doctors of the law: they were not admitted to the degree of companions of their wise men: they were not rulers of the Jews, civil or ecclesiastical: they were in the rank των πολλων *of the many*; men in a private station. And it was this which made *the rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and the kindred of the high-priest*, to wonder so much at the speech of Peter and John; for it expressed a knowledge of the sacred writings, a freedom, an authority and decision, a skill and point in the application of the scriptures, far above what might have been expected from men of their education and rank *. But there is nothing in all this which implies that the Apostles were absolutely without learning, that they could neither write

* Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled:—which is thus paraphrased by Dr. Hammond; “And when they observed the elocution and freedom of speech with which they taught, and withal considering that their education had not thus elevated them above other men, being neither skilled in the learning of the Jews, nor as men of place or magistracy among them instructed in their laws, they were amazed at it.”

nor read, and had never been at school *. Their history implies the contrary ; that they had read the holy scriptures, and were familiarly acquainted with the contents of the bible : and this particular history, out of which the objection is taken, will prove that Peter and John had a sufficient share of learning to speak in presence of the most learned men of the nation, even to their astonishment.

The degree of ignorance which has been imputed to the Apostles is very unworthy of their character ; and a very ill use has been made of it. Let it be considered, whether they were such unlearned and ignorant men as they have been represented. This subject demands the reader's attention.

The generality of Jews, in our Saviour's time, were so well acquainted with the text of holy writ, that, if any one referred to a particular passage, saying, *it is written*, they would immediately recollect the passage and its connection, and could turn to it without hesitation, though their bibles were not divided and numbered, as ours are, in chapters and verses. *Josephus* testifies that

* *Αγπαυαλοι*—Non qui porsus indocti; sed minus eruditi in legibus aliisque disciplinis: non instituti in scholâ Phariseorum: non versati in doctrinis Thalmudicis—Nam scripturas sacras Apostoli et legerant et memoriâ tenebant. *Pol. Synop.*

every

every pious Jew was so well acquainted with the scriptures, that, if questioned concerning any point in their Law, he would answer to the question as readily as he could tell his own name. It does not appear, by any thing we read in the New Testament, that the Apostles were less intimately acquainted with the contents of the sacred volume than the generality of their countrymen. There is not a single expression or intimation of any ignorance of this sort; but quite the contrary.

Before the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, St. Peter's application of several prophecies, in the book of Psalms, to the case of the traitor Judas, to justify the election of another in his room; and the ready assent of the other Disciples present to the authority of these scriptures, as well known and understood by them; will prove that the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord were intimately acquainted with the contents of their bible. There can be no doubt that they, as well as Timothy the son of a Jewess by a Gentile father, had known and read the holy scriptures from their childhood. They had been perpetually in the habit of hearing the scriptures recited, or read publicly, in the synagogues. They there received the instruction which scribes and interpreters were wont to give, in expound-

ing the Scriptures ; which, though mixed with much rabbinical error, conveyed a great deal of literal truth, and of truth relating to the Messiah. And here we ought to take into consideration the influence of the diffused light of revelation, which it is almost impossible should ever be extinguished, either by the sophistical errors of rabbis, school-men, or philosophizing divines. Of the influence of this diffused light of revelation, there is an example in the speech * of the woman of Sichar, a Samaritan ; and of this there are many examples in the incidental history of the Jews in the New Testament ; and it could not fail to produce some effect on the minds of those good men who were afterwards called to be the followers of Jesus Christ.

We are now to recollect the preparatory ministry and teaching of John the Baptist, which continued for the space of three years and an half † ; of which the Disciples of Christ undoubtedly

* *I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ : when he is come, he will tell us all things.* John iv. 25.

† “ St. John the Baptist first preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and therein the gospel of Jesus Christ had its beginning. John the Baptist began the ministry of the gospel in the 15th year of Tiberias, and continued in it for three years and a half ; that is, he began it

doubtedly participated; for they lived in that part of the country where John principally taught and baptized; and it appears that the readiness with which Simon, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, obeyed the call to follow Christ, was in consequence of the Baptist's preaching, and of his testimony concerning Jesus *.

There was a general expectation at this time that the Messiah would soon appear; and John testified that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. He declared the advent of Messiah; that he was actually present, though he had not publicly assumed the character: *There standeth one among you, whom ye know not; but, that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water*. He pointed to the very person of whom he spake, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!* The

it about the time of the Paschal Feast, and continued it till the Feast of Tabernacles in the fourth year after. And then, John being cast into prison, Christ appeared to take it on him in person, and personally carried it on three years and an half more. So that the whole term of Christ's ministry while he was here on earth, as executed first vicariously by John his forerunner, and afterwards personally by himself, was exactly seven years." Prideaux.

* See John i. 29—35—to the end.

disciples of John, some of them at least, believed this his testimony *: *We trusted that it had been he, which should have redeemed Israel* †. But their expectation of redemption rose no higher than to a general reform of the nation. They expected that the Messiah, whom John had described as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, would purify the Jews, by converting them from those sins which had provoked the Divine judgments and subjected them to the Roman power : they expected that the Messiah would establish a most glorious worldly kingdom, of which the peace and glory of Solomon's reign was but a faint shadow; and would introduce a more perfect obedience to the Law of Moses, in its literal signification, than was ever before seen in Israel.

Here we see what was the real ignorance of the Apostles, when Christ called them to follow him. It was ignorance of the most important meaning of the Scriptures, of the spiritual design of the Law : it was ignorance of the true character of the Messiah, of his salvation and kingdom. But if Christ had chosen his Disciples out of the sanhedrim, if he had selected his Apostles from their most excellent doctors,

* John i. 37.

† Luke 24. 21.

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they would, in all these points, have been as ignorant as the Galilean fishermen. It was ignorance resulting from the common prejudice of the nation concerning the temporal glory of Messiah's kingdom, and the perpetuity of the law of Moses. There is not a symptom in any part of the four Gospels and Acts, of any other ignorance that disqualified the Disciples of Christ for the apostolical office, than what resulted from this common prejudice. It was this prejudice which rendered them so dull of apprehension, when they heard the sublime doctrines of their master.

St. John the Baptist had done something towards preparing them for the doctrine of Christ, by preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. It hath been noticed before, that the ministry of John the Baptist continued three years and a half: and, during the same space of time, which comprehended the whole course of our Lord's ministry in person, the Apostles were under the constant tuition of Christ himself, and were all this time in training for the work whereunto they were called, to be fishers of men. They enjoyed the advantage of our Saviour's public instructions; and he expounded his discourses to them by more particular instructions in private. He taught them,
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in closets, what they should afterwards proclaim upon the house-top.*

Towards the close of his ministry, our Saviour, who had carefully prepared their minds for a more perfect knowledge of the mysteries of his kingdom, began to speak less parabolically, and to impart to them a more open revelation of the plan of that merciful providence which he came to establish. But still, much remained to a more perfect day. He told them, a very little while before he suffered, that he *had many things to say unto them*, which they were not yet prepared to receive. By this, he evidently signified, that they had not attained to the degree of *Scribes perfectly instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*. But he assured them that the time was at hand, when he would *shew them plainly of the Father*, i. e. of his will, doctrine, and kingdom. This promise he fulfilled after his resurrection; when

* "The Disciples were chosen by Christ, that they might be with him, eye-witnesses of his works, and students of his doctrine. For they did not presently betake themselves to preach, from the time they were first admitted Disciples; no, nor from the time they were first chosen *Apostles*; but they sat a long while at the feet of their master, and imbibed from his mouth that doctrine which they were to preach."

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*the Sun of righteousness arose, and shined upon them with healing in his beams *.*

Accompanying two of them to Emmaus, he said, *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* And afterwards, when he came to the eleven and others with them, *he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of the Father upon you: but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.*

This is no more than a concise epitome of our Lord's discourses with his Disciples. The sacred historian relates merely the general to-

* Mal. iv. 2.

pics of his instruction, implying larger and very particular discourses on the subject of his death, the necessity of it, and the glorious state of things which should be introduced in consequence of his resurrection. These discourses comprehended all those grand and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, which their prejudices had hitherto rendered them incapable of receiving. And St. Luke informs us, that, during *forty days* from his resurrection, *until the day in which he was taken up, he, through the Holy Ghost, gave commandments to the Apostles whom he had chosen, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*; which means commandments concerning their office, and the discharge of that office, instructions concerning the Christian dispensation, the Christian ministry, the state of the Christian Church, and the manner of the divine administration under the dispensation of the Spirit.

After our Lord's ascension, when he was exalted to the right hand of God, he *received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost*, and largely shed forth this divine gift upon his Apostles *: *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost †*. But, what was the effect? Not

* Acts ii. 33. † Acts ii. 4.

the communication of a new revelation *; which some supposing, have called it THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION, imagining that the Apostles were divinely inspired with the knowledge of new truths, essentially different from the revelation contained in the Law of Moses and the Prophets. This indeed is saying, that our Saviour's course of instruction, *vivâ voce*, had no immediate relation to the subject of the Apostles' ministry; for, he taught them out of the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, and opened their understandings to understand *the Scriptures*: But now, it seems, the Holy Ghost taught them quite another doctrine, and opened their understanding to apprehend another and a new revelation. This opinion has not the least degree of countenance in the holy scriptures: Neither in their preaching, nor in any of their writings, did the Apostles and Evangelists ever pretend to any such inspiration, or to any thing like it.

There is another opinion, as groundless as the former, that the Apostles not only were enlightened by the immediate and direct inspiration of

* Ut Christus Moſis, ita Spiritus Sanctus Chriſti, doctrinam *illuſtravit*; nec quicquam propoſuit *novum*, aut ab illâ *alienum*, ut liquet ex Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Joh. xvi. 13, 14.

Pol. Synop.

the Spirit of God, with the knowledge of divine truths which they had never learned in the ordinary way of instruction, and which were a new revelation ; but also, That they spake and wrote these truths oraculously, and as much under the immediate influence and constraining power of the Divine Spirit, as the Prophets of the Old Testament uttered their prophecies, who, compelled by a divine and over-ruling energy, declared what sometimes they had no mind to utter, and what they themselves did not always perfectly understand *. But the very truth of the case stands in opposition to this opinion.

If any one think to justify this opinion, by alleging, from St. Luke, that on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were filled with the Holy

* For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 *Pet.* i. 21.

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay. *Jer.* xx. 9.

Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently ; who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you ; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11.

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Ghost, they *spake as the Spirit gave them utterance*; he must be told that he has mistaken the meaning of the sacred historian. What St. Luke affirms in *Acts* ii. 4. has no relation to the *subject* of the Apostles' preaching, but to the *means* by which they communicated their doctrine to the people. They began to speak *with other tongues*, in languages which they had never learned, *as the Spirit gave them utterance*; who divided this miraculous power of speaking foreign languages to every one of the Apostles severally as the occasion required; to some a power to speak in this or that language, and to other of the Apostles in other languages; so that Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphilia, Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, heard these Apostles, who were Galileans, speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.

And that the utterance which the Holy Ghost gave the Apostles relates to the languages in which they spake, and not to any new revelation by direct and immediate inspiration, appears in the sample which St. Luke has given of their preaching

preaching on the day of Pentecost. It consisted in the application of the Old Testament prophecies to those events which had recently happened, and which the Apostles faithfully declared upon this occasion. And, in this sermon of St. Peter, there is not the shadow of a new revelation; but simply a testimony of the accomplishment of the old revelation delivered by the Spirit of prophecy. And always after this, both in their preaching and their writings, the Apostles spake and wrote just as other men learned in the Scriptures, reasoning out of them, and proving their doctrines by authority of the written word. They never appealed to those miracles which occasionally they were enabled to work, to induce a belief that the Holy Ghost used the organs of their speech to utter oracular dictates of immediate revelation. Miracles were evidences of the veracity of the Apostles, to confirm their testimony, when they declared the truth of facts which had fallen under their observation. But they appealed solely to the written word, for the truth of those doctrines which they connected with these facts.

They were chosen to be witnesses for Christ; to testify the existence of such a person, what he taught,

taught, and what he did ; that he healed the sick, the paralytic, the lunatic, the leprous, the blind, lame, deaf, dumb ; that he cast out devils, and raised the dead ; and that he wrought these cures miraculously, by the authority and power of his word. They were to be witnesses of the reception he met with, his treatment, the persecutions he endured, his crucifixion, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. Now, there was no need of a special revelation, nor of any inspiration, to enlighten them with a more perfect knowledge of these facts, as facts ; for it is impossible that any direct revelation, or inspiration, should make these things, as facts, more true and certain to the Apostles than the testimony of their own senses. They were eye-witnesses of every one of them. But it was necessary that their minds should be illumined with a perfect understanding of the *importance* of these facts ; which implies a clear apprehension that Christ was the end of the Law and the subject of Prophecy ; and, that these things, every one of which the Apostles witnessed, were written of him. Without this reference to the revelation of God in the Old Testament, to the spiritual meaning of the Law, and to the various predictive testimonies of all the Prophets, these facts, however wonderful or miraculous, would have

no importance, no force of evidence in them, to prove that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the Son of God, the true Messiah. It was therefore necessary—not that the Apostles should learn to construe the words of scripture in the literal sense—not that they should commit them to memory, and be ready in quoting them; for this they had learned already, before our Saviour called them to follow him;—but it was necessary that the veil of prejudice, which had obscured the most important meaning of the scriptures, in relation to the kingdom of Messiah, should be done away; and that they should be able to give the sense of the scriptures, and prove out of them the truth of the character of Christ, by applying the prophecies, and what Moses had typically written or expressly said of him, to the facts of which they, the Apostles, were competent and unexceptionable witnesses.

How far, or in what degree, the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, and the gift of tongues, with the circumstances attending it, might operate upon the minds of the Apostles, without supposing any direct or immediate inspiration, is not possible to be determined. But this is an acknowledged principle, that we are not to suppose a direct or immediate interposition of divine power in any case whatever, where

where there are means or secondary causes sufficient to account for any effect. And this we know, when there are materials of a subject treasured up in the mind, not yet perfectly apprehended in all its relations and importance, a very trifle (in itself a trifle, but in this case very important) shall often at once arrange those materials, and perfect them ; shall reduce our imperfect views into a complete system, and illumine the mind with a clear apprehension of the *importance* and *glory* of that subject, and *fill the heart* with lively *sentiments corresponding with its nature* and use.

Let the reader contemplate the tendency of the preaching of John the Baptist, to counteract the prejudice of the Jews ; that his preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and directing the people to believe on him that should come after him, i. e. on Christ Jesus, implied the insufficiency of the works of the Law to purify them from moral defilement, and justify them in the sight of God : and, *think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father ; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up (spiritual) children unto Abraham*—Let him consider that both John and our Saviour spake of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of

the Father, as synonymous with the kingdom of Messiah; and that they always spake of this kingdom as perfectly distinct from that external state of things which is meant by *the Theocracy*, and which was established by the law of Moses: *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, with any outward form, but is within you; a spiritual kingdom in the understanding and hearts of men: My kingdom is not of this world: The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him: God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.*—Let the reader consider our Lord's sermon on the mount; his conference with Nicodemus, at which most probably the disciples were present; his discourse with the Jews, recorded in the fifth chapter of St. John; his discourse at another time, recorded in the sixth chapter; his parable of the good shepherd in the tenth chapter, with the subsequent comment; his prediction of his own death, John xii. 24. and of the consequent fruit; the institution of the sacrament at his last supper, with its declared reference to the doctrine of atonement by the propitiatory sacrifice
of

of himself, and to the new covenant in his blood:—Let the reader consider the tenor of our Lord's farewell discourse with his disciples, and particularly the parable of the vine, and his prayer in the seventeenth chapter.—Let the reader reflect that all which is recorded by the four Evangelists is but a very small part of the instruction which the Apostles received from his mouth; and then let him consider the impression which the resurrection of Christ would make upon their minds, taken in connection with all that he had taught them before he suffered.—Let him consider the subjects on which he discoursed after his resurrection, and that for the space of forty days he was speaking to them of the kingdom of God.—Let him consider the solemn ordination of the Apostles to their office, and the particular instructions concerning the doctrines they should preach, and the promise of the Holy Ghost to qualify them for the work of the ministry.—Let him consider the manner in which this promise was fulfilled; *the sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, filling all the house where they were assembled*; indicating the interposition of divine power, and the wonderful effects to be produced under the dispensation of the Spirit, in purifying the church, and filling the whole earth, wherever the gospel should come, with

the knowledge of the glory of the Lord ; and *the cloven tongues, like as of fire, resting upon each of the Apostles*, expressing the means, and the lively energy of the means, by which those effects should be produced.—Let him reflect that the Apostles did not consider the gift of the Holy Ghost, and his miraculous operations, merely as a power enabling them to execute all that Christ had commanded, but as a *seal* confirming all that he had told and promised them, and as a *pledge* from the Almighty Father of the eternal inheritance.—Let him revolve all these things in his mind ; and then let him object, if he can, that the Apostles were unlearned, that is, uninstructed and ignorant men, mere tools or instruments of a superior power, speaking the irresistible dictates of inspiration ; or let him object the unreasonableness of the supposition, that the *præparatio evangelica* in the Apostles might have been completed by the event on the day of Pentecost ; and that the gift of the Holy Ghost, with the circumstances attending it, might have been means, or secondary causes, to *teach* them all things, by bringing all things *to their remembrance* whatever Christ had told them, and *guide* them into all the truth, that is, into a perfect understanding of the ultimate design of the Old Testament dispensation, and into a comprehensive

five view of the present dispensation of Providence, so far as was necessary to the immediate objects of their mission.

Our Saviour had assured the Apostles, before he suffered, that the Holy Ghost would *teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatever he himself had told them*; and that he would *guide them into all truth*. But *teaching, bringing to remembrance, and guiding*, are very different from imparting knowledge, or truth, by direct inspiration, or immediate revelation. The former Christ promised: the latter he never intimated. And therefore it seems a mere presumption, in those who assert that the Apostles were favoured with a degree of inspiration, or revelation, which will justify their being called **THE INSPIRED APOSTLES**, in the sense in which they have been so called.

Even on the day of Pentecost, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they were not perfectly enlightened; but only so far as was sufficient to their preaching the gospel of the circumcision, or so far as concerned the Jews only *. Peter's vision at Joppa, and what followed

* The Parthians, Medes, Elamites, &c. to whom the Apostles preached on the day of Pentecost, were Israelites, or Jews of the dispersion, Jews born in Parthia, Media,

lowed thereupon ; the astonishment expressed by those Jews who accompanied Peter * ; and by the Apostles and brethren † in Jerusalem, when Peter related unto them his mission to Cornelius ; and what happened at Antioch, as related by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians ‡ ; plainly prove that the Apostles were not so far enlightened, on the day of Pentecost, as to be able to comprehend the full extent of that merciful dispensation of which they were the appointed ministers.

Persia, all of them of the circumcision ; for, so saith the text, “ there were sojourning at Jerusalem *Jews of every nation.*” This too is confirmed by St. Peter’s speech, “ *Ye men of Israel, hear these words.*” Again, “ The promise “ is made *unto you and your children;*” who could be no other than Jews, or Israelites, of the seed of Abraham. And we find that of these Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, &c. there were added to the Church at that time, by St. Peter’s sermon, 3000 souls : but it is certain that Cornelius was the first Gentile converted to the faith ; therefore those converted on the day of Pentecost were not Gentiles. And if it be said they were proselytes of these nations, and therefore called Jews ; I say, Not so neither ; because proselytes are, by name rehearsed among them, when it is said of those Roman Advenæ they were *Jews and Proselytes* ; ergo, the rest were Jews by race, and not by religion only.

Extracted from the works of the learned Jos. Mede.

* Acts x. 45.

† Ch. xi. 1, 2, 3, 18.

‡ Gal. ii. 11—to the end.

And

And if any one wonder at this, considering that Christ had told his Apostles, previously to his ascension, that they were to be his witnesses in *all the world*, to preach the gospel to *every creature*, and to preach repentance and remission of sins, in his name, *among all nations*; let him reflect how easily their prejudices might confine the meaning of these terms, *all the world*, to every part of the holy land, and *every creature* among *all nations*, to the dispersed Jews and Jewish proselytes in every part of the Roman empire.

Others may wonder at this ignorance of the full extent of the merciful dispensation of Providence, considering that the calling of the Gentiles, to the fellowship of the gospel, was plainly revealed in the Old Testament prophecies; perhaps more plainly than the redemption of *them that were under the Law*, that is, of the Jews, *to the adoption of sons* *. But the prejudice concerning the temporal glory of the kingdom of Israel under the administration of the Messiah, had perverted the meaning of those prophecies; and this accounts for their ignorance in this particular.

The calling and salvation of the Gentiles was an important part of the revelation of God,

* Gal. iv. 5.

though

though no part of the gospel of the circumcision; and, without appearance of unreasonable partiality to ourselves, we may say, It was the most important part of revelation, as it involved the salvation of millions and millions of people, *a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.* And, to be ignorant of this! not to understand the extent of their commission to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature! this is utterly inconsistent with the idea of the plenary inspiration of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. They were, however, sufficiently enlightened, by the previous instructions of their master, to preach to the Jews. And, afterwards, they were led into the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, as St. Paul called it*, by external means of information, and not by internal illumination of the Spirit merely. The means, indeed, were extraordinary: the appearance of an angel to Cornelius was extraordinary: the vision, or trance, of St. Peter, at Joppa, was extraordinary: the intimation of the Spirit, bidding Peter accompany the messengers of Cornelius without hesitation, was extraordinary: the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his company,

* Ephes. iii. 4.

evidenced by miraculous operations, was extraordinary ; and was so in the opinion of St. Peter and his associates, because it was the first instance of the Holy Ghost being poured out upon Gentiles, an event of which the Apostles had not the least degree of expectation. These were the means by which the Holy Ghost *led* the Apostles into the knowledge of this important truth, That God had adopted the Gentiles, and elected them to be *fellow-heirs, and of the same body* with the Jews, *and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel* *. But there is nothing in all this which looks like an immediate inspiration of the Apostles, or the enlightening them by a direct revelation from heaven without means of instruction. And if the Holy Ghost *led* them into all the truth of this great mystery, and *taught* them the full extent of their commission, and *brought to their remembrance* what Christ had said unto them, by subordinate means, without immediate inspiration, why are we to suppose, what is never asserted in the scriptures, that the Apostles were enlightened by immediate inspiration on the day of Pentecost ?

But, whether it were by direct and immediate inspiration, or by the teaching of their divine

* Ephes. iii. 6.

master,

master, or in some degree by both, this is certain, the Apostles were sufficiently qualified for the work of the ministry : they were sufficiently capable of propagating truth, and incapable of deceiving mankind by propagating falsehood. Knowing no other language than the Galilean dialect of the Hebrew tongue, the Holy Ghost imparted to them the miraculous power of speaking in the various languages of the nations. They were enabled to foresee and predict future events, so far as was necessary to the settling Christian societies in all parts of the world. They had a power to work miracles occasionally, to attract the attention of mankind, and to confirm their evidence. But, the most important qualification, to which those miraculous gifts of the Spirit were no more than subordinate means, was the gift of prophecy, which depends as much upon *means of instruction* as upon the enlightening and quickening influence of the Divine Spirit. *Prophecy* consists in an ability to declare the mind and will of God, especially in the *interpretation* of the scriptures. This is the prime sense and meaning of the word *prophecy* * ; and the

Apostles

* *Prime sense*, namely to *speak for* God, to declare his mind and will, without implying the *means* by which the mind

Apostles possessed this gift of prophecy in the most eminent degree. From the time that our Saviour breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, they were delivered from that prejudice of their education, which had obstructed the right understanding of the scriptures in relation to the *nature* of Messiah's kingdom. No longer did the words and actions of Christ appear doubtful and mysterious to them. The scriptures were no longer as a sealed book ; for, at the time when he breathed on them, he opened their understanding to understand the scriptures—not miraculously, but by pointing out in a very particular discourse

mind and will of God had been communicated to him that prophesieth ; and whether the subject relate to any thing past, present, or future : and therefore the character of a *prophet* belongs as properly to an interpreter of the scriptures, as to him that predicts future events ; and *more* so, the one being the *extraordinary* method of prophesying, the other being the usual and permanent character. " So Chrysostom, " *Ὁ προφητης ερμηνευτης εστιν, αλλα τα θεα, A prophet is no more but an interpreter, but that of God.* In which sense, " as Christ's prophetic office consisted in revealing the will of " God to the world ; so all that have in *any degree* done the " like are styled prophets, all that have taught men their " duties towards God and men.—It signifieth, to *expound* or " *interpret* scripture," Hammond.

the

the true meaning of the scriptures, by which it appeared that his death, so far from obstructing the establishment of his kingdom, as they had feared, would be the very ground of its establishment. And, on the day of Pentecost, and thence forward, the Holy Ghost took of the things of Christ, what he had told them, his doctrines and precepts, and what was written of him in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets, and *illustrated* them, shewed them in all their importance and glory to the Apostles: so that they were filled, in the knowledge of God's truth, with zeal and courage which nothing could daunt, and with a spirit of meekness and charity congenial with the heavenly doctrine which they were to preach.

This divine influence, this energetic impression of the truth, upon the minds and hearts of the Apostles, seems to have been the only inspiration which they experienced on the day of Pentecost, excepting the gift of tongues. The effect was much like that of the Psalmist, Ps. xxxix. 3. *While I was musing the fire burned; and I spake with my tongue:* or, like that of the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xx. 9. *His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

There

There are several examples of the same influence occasionally exerted : Acts iv. 8. " Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Ghost*, said unto them," &c. meaning that impression of the Divine Spirit, producing perfect consciousness of right, and a lively apprehension of the importance of the cause in which he was engaged, which freed him from all embarrassment, and excited him to testify of Christ, without fear of personal danger, and with ardent zeal for his master's honour, And when *Peter* and *John* were dismissed, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them : and the whole company lift up their voice with one accord, requesting the divine assistance, ver. 29. " And now, Lord, behold " their threatenings ; and grant unto thy servants, that *with all boldness* they may *speake thy word*." And, ver. 31, their prayer was answered ; for " they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and they *spake the word of God with boldness* : " which does not imply any thing like an immediate inspiration of unknown truth, but the lively impression of the importance of truth already known, animating the ministers of God to speak his word with fervent zeal, with readiness and power, either to the conviction or to the confusion of them that heard it. And thus

thus was fulfilled, what Christ had promised ; *I will give you a mouth and wisdom, freedom and boldness of speech suited to the occasion, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.* And there was nothing more in this, unless perhaps we except the degree of the impression, than what Christian ministers, and Christian people, do now frequently experience ; when occasions and circumstances become means, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, to quicken their apprehensions of those truths which are already known, and to fill them with suitable sentiments and affections.

This review of the history of the Apostles, of their education, learning, and inspiration, will, it is hoped, convince the reader, that every one who would undertake the office of a public preacher of God's word, should first of all be well satisfied that he is furnished with sufficient abilities. To undertake to steer the sacred ark, in which hundreds and thousands, with their eternal interests, are embarked ;—to undertake this charge, without understanding the art of navigation, without a chart, or compass ; or, which is the same thing, without understanding the use of either ;—to undertake the cure of souls, without any professional abilities ;—to assume the office of teaching and expounding the
word

word of God, without having ever once read the Bible through in all their lives; without learning enough to give the analysis of any one book in the Bible, or of one chapter; without having ever studied a single text with its context, nor even the meaning of the words and phrases of the sacred language;—to undertake the office of feeding the flock of Christ, which he purchased with his own blood; and then let them perish for lack of knowledge * through the incapacity of their pastor, his ignorance and inexperience;—to undertake the most important and most difficult of all services, which has often made the best qualified to fear and tremble †;—to undertake this service, as raw and ignorant of theological learning, as they were when creeping through the third or fourth form at school:—*This*, *THIS*, of all the presumptions, of which the folly and wickedness of mankind have ever been guilty, seems to be the *GREATEST!!!*

“ There is one security for those who are insufficient, and that is, NOT to undertake so difficult an office at all.—In my judgment, though a man be entreated and importuned ever so much, he ought not to regard that in

* Hosea iv. 6.

† 1 Cor. ii. 3. Acts xx. 19.

“ this matter; but, first of all, to search dili-
 “ gently into himself, and not to yield to the
 “ most pressing importunities, till he hath well
 “ weighed and considered his own abilities.

“ Will a man undertake to build, who is no
 “ architect? or, will any one attempt to cure
 “ sick persons, who hath no manner of skill or
 “ knowledge in physic? or, though such a one
 “ should be much importuned, would he not
 “ positively persist in his refusal, and not be
 “ ashamed to own his ignorance? And shall
 “ not *he* much rather diligently consider and
 “ examine himself, to whom the care of so many
 “ souls is to be entrusted? or, shall he presume,
 “ though ignorant and unskilful, to execute this
 “ sacred function, because one man perhaps
 “ commands him, another constrains him, or
 “ lest he should offend and disoblige a third?
 “ But is not this the ready way to cast both
 “ himself, and them too, headlong into destruc-
 “ tion? He might possibly have saved himself,
 “ had he continued as he was, that is, in his
 “ private station; but now he draws others along
 “ with him into ruin. For, from whence is
 “ there room to hope for safety, or to expect
 “ pardon? In such a case as this, who will
 “ deprecate our punishment, or entreat for us?

“ What is the reason that in the concerns of
 “ this

" this life, such as the arts of war, of merchan-
 " dize, or husbandry; neither the ploughman
 " will undertake to pilot a ship, nor the soldier
 " to till the ground, nor the mariner to con-
 " duct an army, though you threaten their re-
 " fusál ever so severely? Is it not plainly this;
 " because they foresee the dangerous conse-
 " quences which, in such cases, would attend
 " their unskilfulness? But what! shall we in
 " these lesser things, where the damage is so
 " small in comparison, use so great caution, and
 " boldly resist all compulsion; and yet, in the
 " business of the priesthood, where eternal
 " punishment attends men's unskilfulness, shall
 " we rashly run into so great danger, and
 " then pretend to shelter ourselves under the
 " pressing entreaties of others? Certainly this
 " will never pass with him that judgeth us.
 " For no doubt but men ought to use greater
 " caution in things spiritual, than in things
 " temporal; and yet, here, they are commonly
 " seen to use less: For, give me leave to ask,
 " Suppose, upon an opinion of such a one's
 " being a good architect, we send for him to
 " undertake a piece of work, and he, in obe-
 " dience to us, undertakes it, though he be
 " none; if, when he comes to dispose of those
 " materials that are ready for the building, he

“ confounds the wood and stone, and erects
 “ such a fabric as will fall in a little time, will it
 “ be sufficient for his excuse to say, That he
 “ came not to this undertaking of his own
 “ accord, but was drawn to it by the importunity
 “ of others? It is certain it will not; nor is there
 “ any reason it should, because it was his part
 “ to have shunned these persons, and have fled
 “ from them.

“ But what! shall he who makes away with
 “ such vile materials as wood and stone, not be
 “ able to avoid punishment; and shall that
 “ spiritual builder, who is negligent of his
 “ charge, and loses those souls committed to
 “ him, think to escape, by skreening himself
 “ under the pressing entreaties of others? How
 “ altogether absurd is this? Not to mention,
 “ that no man can be compelled to this against
 “ his will. But, supposing this, that great
 “ compulsion and many artful stratagems were
 “ practised to draw a man into the snare, do
 “ we think that that would secure him from
 “ punishment? For God’s sake, let us not thus
 “ grossly deceive ourselves, nor pretend igno-
 “ rance of that which even children cannot
 “ but know. For, in truth, when we come to
 “ give an account at the last day, this pretended
 “ ignorance will stand us in no stead—” but our
 real

real ignorance and presumption will overwhelm us with confusion, and draw down the vengeance of God upon our guilty heads.

Thus argued *Chrysostom* * against the intrusion of unqualified persons into the sacred office.

And,

* In this note, the reader shall have the sentiments of a Modern Divine on the same subject. “ In most secular concerns, in the polite professions of law and medicine, and even in trade, men are compelled to become masters of their business, before they can practise either with safety or success. Their profession is the object of their lives and of their labours. But the sacred profession, it should seem, is compatible with all stations, accommodate to all employments, and congenial with all dispositions. It may be exercised by the prince or by the subject, by the doctor or by the drawer, by the sanguine or by the saturnine, by the learned or by the unlearned, by those who are masters of many languages, and those who know not even their own.

“ In days of yore, when the Primitive Fathers were serious enough to deem the pastoral function of some consequence, its importance, its duties, its difficulties, were dwelt upon, were held out to public view, in terms of force, perhaps of exaggeration. However, this opinion was then in general request with the serious, and made a pretty general impression. The candidates who had acquired a proper sense of this office, never offered themselves till after many arduous trials of their sufficiency. Their novitiate was long, laborious, and fatiguing. One of the most eloquent of all the Fathers, after his character and abilities were well established, and he was summoned by the public voice to undertake the Apostolate, impressed with an awful idea of his own ima-

And, if the pretence of being qualified for the work of the ministry by the inspiration of the

“gined insufficiency, and of the vast weight of the charge
 “to be supported by him, seceded, for a season, from the
 “presence, and eluded the most diligent enquiries, of his
 “friends. But the case, it appears, is now far other. No
 “one manifests a reluctance, none is backward to urge his
 “pretensions, to the evangelic mission. No student secedes
 “during the Ember Weeks; no undergraduate shrinks from
 “the imposition of hands. Even the highest distinctions
 “and most arduous offices of their order raise little emotion
 “in the minds of modern clerks; and now, no reverend
 “doctor trembles at the offer of the mitre and the lawn.

“Respecting our preparatory qualifications too, we seem
 “equally indifferent. These are discovered to be a work of
 “supererogation. They were formerly demanded as a prior,
 “they are now not seldom made a posterior condition.
 “The operose and conscientious systems of *Chrysostom* and
 “of *Burnet* are demolished, or exploded. The reluctant
 “scrupulosity of a *St. Basil*, with the sublime theory of
 “a *Gregory Nazianzen*, are divided and done away. The
 “learned dreams of these pious visionaries are rejected,
 “with all the fastidious disdain of fashionable refinement.
 “Academic discipline or graduation, formerly, first fitted
 “the student for his future office: but this order of things
 “is now, oftentimes, with admirable dexterity reversed.
 “The student is first and freely made a divine, and promises
 “to qualify afterwards. Make him a deacon, and he en-
 “gages to become a theologian; induct him to a valuable
 “incumbency, and he will in time turn out an egregious
 “parish priest.”

Observ. on the Decline of the Clerical Credit and Character.

Divine

Divine Spirit, without professional skill obtained by diligent study and learning, had been known in his time, he would probably have mentioned it in his book *De sacerdotio*. He has indeed introduced an objection bordering upon this pretence; for, when he had insisted on the importance of eloquence to a successful discharge of the ministerial function, and recommended a careful study of *the art of speaking well*, Basil opposed to it the example of St. Paul, "who," said he, "neither studied to obtain this art, nor dissembled his want of it, and confessed that he was *rude and unskilful in speech*." Chrysostom replied, "This is that very thing which hath ruined many, by rendering them more negligent and remiss in their application to the study of the true doctrine. For, not being able to reach the depth of St. Paul's meaning, nor understand the sense of those words, they have, as it were, nodded away their whole lives in indolence and sloth, affecting not such an ignorance as St. Paul speaks of, but such a one as he was the farthest from of all men living."

This reply, with a very little alteration, will serve as an answer to those unlearned men, who plead the example of St. Paul to justify their pretensions to knowledge by inspiration. "This is

“ that very thing which hath been the ruin of
 “ many, by rendering them negligent and re-
 “ miss in their application to study and learning.
 “ For, not being able to reach the depth of this
 “ Apostle’s meaning, nor understanding the
 “ sense of his words, when disclaiming his own
 “ great abilities, he ascribed all his knowledge
 “ and success to the revelation of the Spirit and
 “ to the power and grace of God, they have ne-
 “ glected the means which God hath appointed
 “ for their illumination and success, pretending
 “ not to such a revelation and assistance as St.
 “ Paul speaks of, but such as he was the furthest
 “ from of all men living.”

St. Paul, before his conversion, possessed a
 great share of that kind of learning which was
 most cultivated in Judea. He had studied the
 Law and the Prophets, the customs of the Jews
 and the traditions of the Elders *: he was not
 ignorant of the philosophism of the Sadducees,
 nor of the doctrines of the Pharisees; nor was he
 unacquainted with Grecian literature †, nor
 with the history, the policy, and learning of the
 Romans ‡. But by what means did he attain to
 the knowledge of Christ, of his true character

* Phil. iii. 4. Acts xxii. 3. Gal. i. 14. † Acts xvii. 28.
 Tit. i. 12. ‡ Acts xxi. 37. c. xxv. 10, 11. c. xxvi. 24, 25.
 and

and doctrine? By what means was he qualified to preach the faith which once he destroyed? Was it by external means of instruction, or by the immediate, the internal inspiration of the Spirit?

Let us consider, first, the office of an Apostle; and then we shall better understand the means by which St. Paul was qualified to discharge this office. An Apostle is one sent or deputed by another to declare his mind and transact business for him with a third person, or with any number of persons, at a distance. In the New Testament the word *Apostle* expresses the office of those first and highest ministers of Jesus Christ, sent by him with sovereign and independent authority, to preach his Gospel, and to establish churches, or christian societies, in all the world. This was the highest dignity and the most important charge that was ever conferred upon mortal men; far superior to any thing that distinguished Moses and the Prophets, or even John the Baptist*.

There are three things essential to this office. First, to have seen Jesus Christ alive after his death †, that a full testimony might be given to the certainty of his resurrection: Secondly, au-

* Matt. xi. 9, 10, 11.

† 1 Cor. ix. 1.—c. xv. 8. Acts xxvi. 16.

thority and commission from the Lord Jesus Christ himself *; for apostolical power cannot be derived from a deputy, it must come immediately from the principal : and Thirdly, an extraordinary measure of the Divine Spirit, imparting the gift of tongues †, and a power to work miracles ‡, and to communicate this gift to others §. The gift of tongues was necessary to enable the Apostles to preach the gospel, and to declare their testimony in all parts of the world : and the power to work miracles was necessary to confirm their testimony, and to seal the truth of God's promises, especially to those who did not know and believe the scriptures.

Saul of Tarsus, who was called *Paul* when he became an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was a bitter enemy and persecutor of our Lord's disciples. Not content with the blood of the protomartyr St. Stephen, he continued to persecute unto death, and made havock of the church—not content with breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples in Jerusalem—not content with dragging men and women to

* John xx. 21. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. Gal. i. 12.

† Acts i. 5.—c. ii. 23. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts ii. 4. Heb. ii. 4.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 10, 11. Rom. xv. 19.

§ Acts viii. 17. Mark xvi. 17, 18. Acts x. 46, c. xi. 15, 17. c. viii. 17, 18. c. xix. 6. Eph. i. 13.

prison, compelling them to blaspheme, and procuring their death by turning informer and witness against them—All the mischief he could do at Jerusalem was too little to satisfy the bigotry of this fierce persecutor; for, being exceedingly mad against the Christians, he persecuted them even unto strange cities; he solicited and obtained letters of authority from the Sanhedrim to the Jews of Damascus, that, if he found any disciples of Christ there, he might have power to seize upon their persons and bring them bound unto Jerusalem to be punished.

But when he approached near to Damascus, suddenly, at mid-day, there shone round about him a light from heaven, exceeding the meridian brightness of the sun. It was the effulgent glory of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who appeared in person to this persecutor, and struck him to the ground. That it was not merely a light, without the distinct object from which it proceeded, that he saw, is determined by the speech of *Ananias*, who was sent to Saul three days after this event, and who thus addressed him: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that *appeared unto thee* in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

And he said, "The God of our fathers hath
 "chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will,
 "and *see* THAT JUST ONE, and shouldst hear
 "the voice of *his mouth*; for thou shalt be his
 "witness unto all men of what thou hast *seen and*
 "*heard*. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise
 "and wash away thy sins, calling on the name
 "of the Lord." And, in his first epistle to the
 Corinthians, St. Paul asked, "Am I not an
 "Apostle? Have I not *seen* Jesus Christ our
 "Lord?" And again, in the fifteenth chapter,
 he affirmed, "Last of all, *He was seen of me also*,
 "as of one born out of due time *."

In the beginning of his epistle to the Romans,
 St. Paul declared his appointment to the office
 of an Apostle: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,
 "called to be *an Apostle*, separated unto the go-
 "spel of God, concerning his son Jesus Christ
 "our Lord, by whom we have received grace
 "and *apostleship*, for obedience to the faith
 "among all nations for his name." And in the
 beginning of his epistle to the Galatians, he as-
 serted that his commission was received from
 the Lord himself: "Paul, an Apostle, not of

* If the reader consult the following passages, he will see
 reason to believe that our Lord frequently appeared to this
 Apostle: Acts xxii. 18, 21. 2 Tim. iv. 17. Acts xviii. 9,
 c. xxiii. 11. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4, 9. *men,*

" men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ,
 " and God the Father." Our Lord Jesus
 Christ delivered his commission to this Apostle
 by the voice of his mouth, when Saul was going
 to Damascus: " I am Jesus whom thou perse-
 " cutedst. But rise, and stand upon thy feet:
 " for I have *appeared* unto thee for this purpose,
 " to make thee a *minister* and a *witness* both
 " of these things which thou hast *seen*, and
 " of those things in the which I *will appear*
 " unto thee; delivering thee from the people,
 " and from the Gentiles, unto whom *now I*
 " *send thee*; to open their eyes, and to turn
 " them from darkness to light, and from the
 " power of Satan unto God, that they may re-
 " ceive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance
 " among all them which are sanctified by faith
 " in me."

That St. Paul possessed the other qualifi-
 cations of an Apostle, the gift of tongues and of
 miracles, cannot be disputed. The Corinthian
 church was enriched with abundant gifts of the
 Spirit, in all utterance and in all knowledge;
 and yet St. Paul said, " I thank my God, I speak
 " with tongues *more than you all*." And who
 has not read, Acts xix. that " God wrought spe-
 " cial miracles by the *hand of Paul*?" and
 that

that " the Lord granted signs and wonders to
 " be done *by him*, by which he gave testimony
 " to the word of his grace." And he possessed
 the apostolical power of communicating the mi-
 raculous gifts of the Spirit by imposition of
 hands ; for, when he came to Ephesus and found
 certain disciples who had not received the mira-
 culous gifts of the Holy Ghost since they believ-
 ed, *he laid his hands upon them*, and then imme-
 diately " the Holy Ghost came on them, and
 " they spake with tongues and prophesied."

But the most important question remains to
 be answered : By what means was St. Paul
 taught, instructed, enlightened, and qualified to
 preach the gospel ? Was it by immediate inspira-
 tion or otherwise ? St. Paul himself will answer
 in Gal. i. 11, 12. " I certify you, brethren,
 " that the gospel which was preached of me, is
 " not after man. For I neither received it of
 " man, neither was I taught it (*in any other*
 " *way*) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 He does not say, I was instructed by inspiration,
 but by *the revelation of Jesus Christ*. The terms
 inspiration and revelation are not synonymous.
 Revelation may be communicated by inspira-
 tion ; though, perhaps, not primarily ; not an
 original revelation : or it may be communicated
 without

without any inspiration at all, by the personal appearance and voice of the Lord himself; in which way revelation was communicated to Adam before and after his fall, and to Abraham, Moses, the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, and here in this instance to St. Paul. And does not the Apostle, in this passage of his epistle to the Galatians, refer to that never to be forgotten *αποκαλυψις*, that personal manifestation of Christ to this Apostle, in his way to Damascus, when he saw the Prince of Life, the Lord of Glory, and heard his voice, saying, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest?* *Εγω ειμι Ιησους ο Ναζωραιος*, whom thou hast reviled by this name, and art persecuting with mad but impotent rage; by which thou mayst injure and destroy thyself, but canst never prevail against God. *But rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to appoint thee to the office of a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things which thou shalt hereafter learn by my appearing to thee again, rescuing thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee an Apostle to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that by the faith which is in me, they may receive forgiveness*
of

of sins, and an appointed portion amongst the consecrated people of God.

These extraordinary means of instruction were literally a revelation of Jesus Christ ; but not by *inspiration* ; not a knowledge of Christ and his gospel communicated by the internal and extraordinary illumination of the Holy Ghost. And what inspiration could he want, who had attained to the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who had seen him alive after his passion, and seen him in glory, and who had heard the voice of his mouth, the declaration of his will, and the plan of his most merciful and gracious providence ? He had been *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the Fathers* ; he had studied the writings of Moses and of the Prophets ; he was intimately acquainted with the Scriptures, and was ignorant in no point of biblical learning, excepting only what related to the true character of the Messiah and his kingdom ; and this ignorance was so perfectly done away by the manifestation of Christ, and by what he heard from his mouth, that he was qualified to go immediately into the synagogues, as soon as he had washed away his sins, to preach the faith which he came purposely to destroy.

The

The notion of inspiration, of being enlightened with the knowledge of Christian doctrines by the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit, seems inconsistent with this and other facts in the history of St. Paul. For, if he were taught by immediate inspiration, what need was there to send him to Ananias for instruction? What need of Christ's appearing to him again and again to instruct him? What need of so many visions and revelations? And, what need of his being caught up into the third heaven *, to learn

* *And heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* 2 Cor. xii. 4. Some suppose that St. Paul heard what cannot possibly be expressed in any language used by men. But, how then did he himself hear and understand these *unspeakable words*?—Some suppose that he could repeat or express what he heard, in any language with which he was acquainted; but, that what he heard was a greater secret than the Eleusinian mysteries, or which God did not permit the church to know. But, to what end, then, was St. Paul made to hear them? Were not all his abilities, all his knowledge, for the edification of the church? It seems most probable that the subject of those visions and revelations, of which he speaks, 2 Cor. xii. 1, was that mystery of Christ in the dispensation of God towards the Gentiles, including the growing power of Antichrist, and the subversion of the imperial authority of the Emperors. These were indeed unspeakable words, and not lawful to be divulged plainly. They would excite the jealousy of the Roman power, and could not

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fail

learn the mysterious dispensations of God towards the Gentiles?

But what was the design of Providence in converting this violent persecutor, and calling him to be an Apostle separated unto the gospel of God? For *this cause*, he himself tells us, I obtained mercy, that *in me, ᾧ ποῦτος, the first,* the chief of violent persecutors, the most daring opposer of the gospel, and, in this respect, *the chief of sinners*, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, *for a pattern* to them which should *hereafter* believe on him to life everlasting *—probably *for a pattern* to repenting Jews, when they shall *hereafter* look on him whom they have pierced; to demonstrate, by this example of St. Paul, that the reprobation of Jews is not absolute and final—not a repro-

fail to produce the greatest inconveniencies to the churches of the Gentiles, and the greatest obstructions to the propagation of Christianity. What would the Emperors or the Roman people have thought of Christianity, if it had been publicly known, that the professors of this religion entertained a persuasion that a Power would arise, and even spring out of Christianity itself, which would finally subvert the authority of the Emperors, and the majesty of the Roman people, in the East and West? The caution with which St. Paul mentioned this subject in 2 Theff. ii. is very remarkable, especially in ver. 5, 6, 7. * 1 Tim. i. 16.

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bation of them as men, but as unbelievers, so long only as they continue to reject the gospel; and that, though broken off from the olive-tree, God is able to graft them in again—and will do so, if they continue not still in unbelief. This agrees with the very use which this Apostle makes of his conversion in Rom. xi. *I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid! for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.* But this is only a subordinate reason, and has no immediate relation to his office as an *Apostle*.

He tells us, that God had separated him from his mother's womb, and chosen him to be a Minister and an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly the providence of God had watched over him from his birth, and directed his education to this end. And it was his learning, his natural temper, and acquired abilities, which made him to be peculiarly fit to become the Apostle of the Gentiles, to preach the gospel to the polished Greeks, as well as to rude barbarians—to the wise, σοφοίς, as well as to the unlearned. And it was the violence of his zeal against the truth of Christ, which made him to be the more an unexceptionable witness of our Saviour's resurrection. Here then, in this ex-

ample, we see the advantage of learning ; and, by this example, God teaches us the importance of those personal qualifications for the ministry, which are either the gift of nature, or may be acquired by human industry ; and which, though of no account in themselves, and, in the hands of those who are unskilful in the word of life, will rather hinder the work of grace than forward it, yet, sanctified to the service of the sanctuary, are highly expedient, and even necessary. St. Paul made the happiest use of these abilities, in converting the nations, and governing the churches.

When he told the Corinthians, that Christ did not send him to preach the gospel with *the wisdom of words*, and that he came to them not with *excellency of speech* or of *wisdom*, and that his speech and his preaching was not with *enticing words of man's wisdom*, what is it that the Apostle disclaimed ? Not wisdom, surely ; for he subjoined, *Howbeit we speak wisdom*, that which is truly so, the highest wisdom, among them that are perfect ; yet, not the wisdom of *this world*, nor of the *princes of this world*, of statesmen and philosophers. He disclaimed, therefore, nothing more than the use of flattering and enticing words, sophistical arguments,

arguments, curious and vain speculations, philosophical subtilties, human policy, worldly wisdom, the art of accommodation, adulterating the sublime truths of Christianity by reducing them to the principles of natural reason, and the prejudices of men of corrupt minds. This kind of seducing oratory and wisdom the Apostle disclaimed, and never used. Yet never was there any one who better understood the legitimate powers of true oratory than this Apostle, nor who used them with more success.

Let the effect of his reasoning on *Felix*, when he discoursed of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come—let his speech in the Areopagus, and that to the Elders of the Ephesian Church, and that before King Agrippa, be taken in proof of his oratory, of his learning, and of his wisdom. What orator *ever* more carefully *insinuated* himself into the good opinion and confidence of his auditors than this Apostle does in all his epistles, by expressing his solicitude for their welfare to whom his epistles are addressed, his design to promote their interests, his love, his sufferings, and his fervent prayers for them, his rejoicing in their prosperity, and thanks to God on their behalf? What orator *ever stated his subject* with more clearness and precision?

precision? Who ever *established* the truth which he had undertaken to defend, or to commend to his auditors, with more decisive and cogent reasonings? Who ever anticipated objections with greater address, or answered them more convincingly? Who ever more happily illustrated his subject *? Where shall we find a finer *climax* than in Rom. viii. 31——to the end? Where shall we meet with more just and striking metaphors than in all the epistles of this Apostle? And where shall we find more powerful *persuasives*, than he hath used, to excite the most lively zeal for that *practice* and *conduct* which are most agreeable to the subject of his discourse and the natural result of his arguments?

“ If any one should pretend, that the smoothness of *Isocrates*, the gravity of *Demosthenes*, the majesty of *Thucydides*, and the sublimity of *Plato*, were necessary for a Bishop, I should not need to produce any stronger evidence against it than this of *St. Paul*. But I pass by all those things; I make no account of those curious ornaments of prophane eloquence; nor am I at all concerned for the

* See examples, 1 Cor. xii. 12. and following verses. Chap. xv. 36. &c.

“ nicety of every phrase or sentence. And,
 “ indeed, let the diction be as plain and una-
 “ dorned as you please; let a man’s composi-
 “ tion be as simple and inartificial as he will;
 “ only let him not be raw in *knowledge*, nor
 “ *unskilful* in respect of doctrines, in *discerning*
 “ truth from error; neither let him seek to
 “ shelter his own idleness under a vain pre-
 “ tence, by robbing this blessed Apostle of that
 “ which was his highest encomium, and the
 “ very summit of all his praise.

“ For, how was it, I would ask, that *he con-*
 “ *founded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus **,
 “ when he had not as yet begun to work
 “ miracles? By what means was he too hard
 “ for the *Grecians †*? And what was the cause
 “ for which he *was sent to Tarsus ‡*? Was it
 “ not because he had vanquished them by the
 “ force of his arguments (for as yet, I observed
 “ before, he had wrought no miracles at all),
 “ and had driven them to such extremities,
 “ that, not being able to bear the foil, they
 “ resolved to murder him? Neither is there
 “ room to object, that it was the glory of those
 “ mighty works which he wrought that rendered

* Acts ix. 22.

† *Ibid.* ix. 29.

‡ *Ibid.* ix. 30.

" him wonderful in the eyes of the people, and that
 " they who disputed with him were overpowered
 " by the prodigious opinion men had of him on
 " that account ; for, hitherto, he conquered by
 " dint of argument only. How else was it
 " that he contended so earnestly, and disputed
 " at *Antioch* so warmly, against those that were
 " for following the Jewish ceremonies?—How
 " do we find him employed at *Theſſalonica*, at
 " *Corinth*, at *Ephesus*, and at *Rome* itself? Did
 " he not, in all those places, spend whole days
 " and nights in expounding to his auditors the
 " Holy Scriptures, in their order?

" It appears, then, that both before his mira-
 " cles and afterwards, St. Paul made use of *much*
 " *eloquence*. With what face, therefore, will any
 " one dare to pronounce him ignorant or un-
 " skilful, whose sermons and disputations were
 " so exceedingly admired by all that heard
 " them? Let any one tell me what was the rea-
 " son why the people of *Lycaonia* took him for
 " *Mercury*? for that *Paul* and *Barnabas* were
 " thought to be gods, was owing to their mira-
 " cles; but that St. *Paul* particularly was
 " taken for *Mercury*, was not owing to them,
 " but to his excellent faculty of speaking.

" In what else did this blessed saint excel the

" rest

“rest of the Apostles? and how comes he more
 “especially to be in the mouths of all men
 “throughout the whole world? How is it that
 “he is admired beyond all the rest, not by us
 “only, but by *Jews* and *Gentiles* also? Is it not
 “for the excellence of his epistles? * * * * *
 “* * * * *. Nor are those
 “writings sufficient only in respect of doctrine,
 “for the subversion of false ones, and the de-
 “fence of those that are true; but in respect of
 “our morals also, they are of excellent use for the
 “regulating of our lives: * * * * *
 “* * * * *. Such and so powerful are
 “those medicines which are left us by him
 “whom they would represent as an ignorant
 “and unskilful man, the experience of which
 “they are well acquainted with, who have
 “them in constant use. And from all this it
 “is manifest, that St. *Paul* had given himself up
 “to these sorts of *studies with much diligence and*
 “*application* *.”

St. Paul well knew the importance of learn-
 ing †; and it was with a deep sense of its im-
 portance

• *Chrysostom.*

† We find him in one of his epistles to Timothy, in the true
 dialect of a scholar, “expressing an emphatical, and rather
 “an *impatient* wish for the arrival of the books, but *especial-*
 “*ly*

portance to Christian people, and to Christian ministers in particular, he thus exhorted Timothy: *Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine—Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; for, in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee—Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE thee WISE unto salvation.* And to the same effect he informed Titus, that a bishop must hold fast the faithful word AS HE HATH BEEN TAUGHT, that he MAY BE ABLE, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. But how should the unlearned be able to convince such persons,

as *by of the parchments which he had left behind him.* Σπουδασον ελθειν προς με ταχεως· and soon after he subjoins, Τον φελονην ον απελιπον εν Τρωαδι παρα Καρπω, ερχομενος φερε, και τα βιβλια, ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ τας μεμβρανας.—There was a famous academy at Antioch, in which it is said St. Luke was educated, and where he studied physic. His superior education appears in the style of his writings. And, may we not attribute St. Paul's partiality for St. Luke, and his associating with such a man, to his partiality or taste for learning?

and

and stop their mouths? What need to give attendance to reading, and to study the scriptures, and to make evident proficiency in knowledge by studying them, if, after all, men may be qualified for the office of public teachers in the church, or of bishops, by inspiration, without learning, or with the most moderate share of learning, and without a progressive improvement in knowledge by a constant application to theological studies?

The Apostles and Evangelists in the primitive church proved themselves to be sufficiently qualified to interpret the sacred scriptures. They quoted them with wonderful readiness and propriety, and gave the sense, and applied it with great judgment. But they who in this our day pretend to inspiration, and fancy themselves to be miraculously qualified for the office of public teachers in the church, are perpetually guilty of the grossest perversions and misapplications of the sacred text; which could not happen if these men were really inspired, as they pretend *. For if the scriptures were read
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* A preacher of this sort took his text from 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Without taking any notice of the context, or attempting to explain his text by the drift of the subject in this part
of

and interpreted under influence of the same Spirit by which they were written, the very same meaning would infallibly appear, in reading and interpreting them, which was in the mind of the sacred penmen when they wrote the scriptures. The Holy Ghost cannot be inconsistent with himself. He cannot inspire people to mistake, to pervert and abuse the scriptures, and to pour forth undigested harangues, whose strongest tendency is to prejudice the minds of all sensible

of the epistle, he determined its meaning at once, and discoursed about *eternal justification*; that believers were justified from all eternity, and for ever. He spoke much of deliverance from the Law of God, and from all law enforced by sanctions of rewards and punishments in a future state. He taught the people to consider themselves as dead to the Law, delivered from its obligations, and freed from all uneasiness of mind on account of their sins, or any repetitions of them in future; because, being perfectly righteous in Christ, they were without sin in the sight of God, and safe for ever. Whether this doctrine be sincere or perverted truth, or absolute falshood, the text had no more relation to it than it has to the modern doctrine of the natural rights of men. The text related wholly to the hardships and persecutions to which the Apostles were exposed.

The office of a preacher is to interpret and expound the scriptures—to give the sense, and to make it evident that it is the sense—the truth of God, and nothing but the truth. Perversions of the sacred text, as in the preceding example, have

sible people against the office of preaching, and to render it utterly contemptible.

The inspiration of the Spirit, that knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and those holy affections produced by a divine influence, are connected with the written revelation, are never without it, and never exceed its limits; that is, no one is ever inspired by the Spirit of God in the knowledge of his truth and of the dispensations of his mercy and grace, who has not read and studied, and meditated upon the Law of his God contained in the holy scriptures; or who has not heard the scriptures read, and has not

have a fatal tendency to corrupt the word of God, and are as inconsistent with the pretence of inspiration, as they are with the real possession of sound learning.

To adulterate the word of God with our own fancies, or with the opinions, doctrines, and commandments of men, is no slight offence. It is not mixing a harmless powder with some sovereign remedy; when libertinism, fatalism, mysticism, and nonsense, are incorporated with the doctrines of revelation, and recommended in the words of the sacred language as the very truth itself. This is not merely touching the sacred ark with an unconsecrated hand: it is tumbling it down into the dirt, into the filthy puddles of human folly, and exposing the most venerable truths of God to the scorn and contempt and ridicule of those Philistines, who, if the ark had been supported by able and faithful *Levites*, would have been awed, at least, into fear and reverence of the God of Israel.

been

been instructed out of the written word by those who have read, and studied, and meditated upon it: and no one is, nor can be, inspired with the spiritual understanding of the scriptures, any farther than as he is acquainted with the literal sense of the scriptures. If it were not so, why might we not expect to find ministers of the Gospel, preachers of Christianity, and men and women enlightened with the knowledge of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ, in the woods of America, in the interior deserts of Africa, or in the Pelew and Sandwich islands? Could any such persons be found in any part of the world, or any persons here at home, enlightened beyond the proportion of external means of information, we might then contradict the Apostle, and say, people may call upon him of whom they have never heard, or that they may hear without a preacher sent unto them, and become wise unto salvation without the scriptures, that is, without the means which God hath ordained to make them wise, and to accomplish in them the purpose of his mercy. And when we are got into such a wild way of speaking, we may as well think of being providentially fed with bread without ploughing, or sowing, or reaping the fruits of the earth.

It is indeed the blessing of Heaven which
maketh

maketh rich ; the blessing of God upon the use of the appointed means, prospering our industry, our skill and labour : and he that will not work must starve ; he that will not use the appointed means, if he starve not, will suffer, in a greater or less degree, the punishment of his egregious folly. And so it is under the dispensation of the superior providence of God. The means of grace, those which relate to a future world, and for which there could not be any provision in the constitution of the present system, for then it would be both present and future, this world and the other—these means, *extra ordinem naturæ*, are given to me, to you, and to millions more. We deserved them not : they are not the reward of our merit : they are the gift of Heaven ; and not a debt due from the Creator to his creature man : no such thing. But being given, the light of heaven surrounds us ; yet man, prone to earth, perceiveth it not : the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it. Therefore, while the preachers of the word testify of God, and excite attention, the Spirit of God, secretly, unperceived by us, draws and persuades us by these means, and blesses and prospers the proper use of them when the end is duly sought : yet

to that under this dispensation of the Spirit, every one is as accountable to God as the Angels are, or as Adam was in Paradise. Under this dispensation of the Spirit, let a man use the means with due regard to the end, and the Spirit of God will enlighten and sanctify him perfectly. But, if he resist and quench the Spirit; if he neglect the means, and despise the end; if he choose rather to be a worldling in one fashion or another; if he determine to be guided by his own wisdom, which cannot reach beyond the system with which he is naturally connected; and resolve to follow the impulse of his own lusts and passions, in opposition to the dispensation of the Spirit, under which the sovereign disposer of all things hath placed him; then the hour will come when the Spirit of God will no longer strive with man, and he that is disobedient will plunge into everlasting darkness, and God will forsake him for ever.

We often see people of mean abilities, and with slender means, not only sufficiently provided for, but growing rich; while others of greater natural abilities, fortunate in their situation and circumstances, and having the fairest opportunities to make their fortune, yet scarcely keep their heads above water, and not unfrequently

quently sink under it and perish. The former are frugal, prudent, and industrious, making the best use of such means as they have ; the other, prodigal, imprudent, idle, and either neglect to use the means and to improve opportunities to their advantage, or else slightly use, or pervert them. Just so it is in the kingdom of God : and surely it is not unreasonable to say there is a wonderful analogy between the material and spiritual systems, since the same Lord is Lord over all, the same Being is the Author of both systems, and perhaps intended that the constitution and order of things in this visible world should be a type of the spiritual and future world. Some there are who, with slender means, and a poor share of knowledge of the scriptures, are very rich in grace, and far more holy and happy than others who have better opportunities and a greater share of learning. But what makes the difference ? It is the blessing of Heaven, the influence of the Divine Spirit, which prospers the humble desires and earnest endeavours of the former in the use of such means as they have ; and does not, and will not, prosper the latter, who, though possessing better opportunities and more knowledge, have not an equal share of prudence, and therefore

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never

never attain the true riches, wisdom and grace *.

He that clearly discerns the great truths of revelation in their importance, and so as to feel their importance to himself, is sufficiently instructed to be wise unto salvation; for his knowledge of these truths will make a strong and lasting impression upon his heart, and will excite within him those holy affections and dispositions which will have a happy influence upon his practice, and fit him for the future state of the church. But, to be a public minister of the word, requires other talents. A private soldier in the army may well understand his duty; he may be well disciplined, and expert in the evolutions of his regiment; but he is not fitted by

* "It is most true that there is need of the concurrence of
 "God's assistance and blessing, his grace and his providence,
 "to the use of all ordinary means, to render them successful
 "to us; and so there is need of God's illuminating Spirit to
 "assist our weak eyes, our dark faculties. But then this
 "illumination is but that which is annexed to the use of
 "the means, and not that which works without them: and
 "this act of his Providence is a suggesting of means which
 "had not otherwise been thought of, had not God by his
 "good hand directed to them; which he doth, not by any
 "inspiration, but by offering occasions which human indus-
 "try is left to improve, and if it do not, receives no benefit
 "by them," *Hammond.*

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these qualifications for the office of a commander in chief, nor for that of a colonel or a captain. And he that has used the means of grace to his own advantage, and has acquired the best character as a private Christian, may be as unfit for the office of a public teacher, as a private soldier to conduct an army.

How a man, who is not intimately acquainted with the contents of the sacred volume, or who has never studied the holy scriptures, should be qualified to interpret the mind and will of God, to expound the scriptures, and to apply the meaning of them to the various cases and conditions of his hearers, cannot be conceived. Is it possible that any goodness of heart, or sincerity of intention, or even inspiration itself, should ever qualify any one for the due discharge of this sacred office, who has no theological learning? Sufficient abilities cannot, indeed, be obtained without the assistance of God's Spirit; nor with this assistance, unless it be joined with the use of learning, study, meditation, rational inference, collation of parallel passages, where the same words, and the same or like meanings occur, together with unbiaſſed affections, an upright mind, a zealous desire to know the truth and to be conformed to it, and constant prayer to God

for his special blessing on our sincere endeavours.

It is an office, undoubtedly, that requires learning and judgment, matured by experience; and it cannot be denied that the object of it is worthy of all this care and diligence. And if any one intending to undertake it, should be struck with a consciousness of his insufficiency, he ought most certainly, for the present, to withdraw his purpose, and give himself up to retirement, to daily reading, searching, and weighing the scriptures, and to other kinds of learning which may assist him in the discharge of this high office. And if any one find himself incapable of that degree of application which is necessary, he ought to give up his design altogether of engaging in this work. He would do better far to get his bread in the meanest services, than undertake, without sufficient abilities and entire devotion, so important an office, and which has so much awful responsibility attached to it.

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P O S T S C R I P T.

THERE are two passages in the epistles of St. Paul, which may be thought sufficient to oppose the preceding account of the inspiration of the Apostles ; and which, therefore, it is necessary should be noticed.

The first of these passages is in the second chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. *But God hath revealed them unto us BY HIS SPIRIT, namely, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* “We speak, ver. 3. “the wisdom of God in a mystery, the bidden “wisdom,” that which was expressed enigmatically, or typically, in the Old Testament, and therefore obscurely—which neither the rulers of the Jews, neither the Scribes and Pharisees, nor Herod and Pontius Pilate, knew or understood ; for, had they known, they never could have been so mad as to crucify the Lord of Glory. And, in truth, the doctrine of Christ, and every part of the plan of God’s merciful providence, was, and is, and must ever remain far above out of the sight of every one who is not enlightened by revelation ; agreeably to what *Isaiab* prophesied, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which*

God hath prepared for them that love him. "But
God hath revealed them unto us BY HIS SPI-
RIT," namely, in the Old Testament scrip-
 tures, which contain a revelation of those things
 which the eye of human reason could never dis-
 cover, which the ear never heard from the
 mouth of any merely human instructor, and
 which the heart or imagination of man could
 never conceive nor invent. But *the Spirit*, under
 whose influence the prophets, all of them from
 Moses to Malachi, prophesied, *searcheth* all
 things, yea, the deep things of God; and he
 only could reveal what is now made manifest
 by the revelation of Jesus Christ, in the true
 knowledge and understanding of the scriptures.

The other passage is in *Ephes. iii. 5.* *Which*
in other ages was not made known, AS it is now
revealed unto his Holy Apostles and Prophets BY
THE SPIRIT. In ver. 2. the Apostle speaks
 of the *dispensation of the grace of God* toward
 the Gentiles, which he calls, ver. 4. *the mys-*
tery of Christ. This mystery, he tells us, ver. 3,
 was made known unto himself by *revelation*, by
 the personal appearance of Christ in the way to
 Damascus, in the temple at Jerusalem three
 years afterwards, and in visions at sundry times.
 In calling it a *mystery*, he does not mean that it
 was

was at any time an absolute secret, and utterly unknown; but comparatively so. It was not so clearly and perfectly understood *in other ages*, in all particular circumstances, as to manner, time, place, persons, and as to the degrees of advantage and number of privileges to which the Gentiles should be admitted. Even the Prophets themselves, who prophesied of the grace which should come in the day of Christ, were far from understanding the whole plan of this merciful providence; who, therefore, in eager desire to know more of it, "enquired and searched diligently to understand what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things *which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven* *." And undoubtedly, if the Prophets themselves enquired and searched diligently in the sacred writings to understand the dispensation of the grace of God; and if they prophesied in their writings for the advantage and instruction of the Apostles and other ministers of Christ; it

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.

may fairly be concluded, that the Divine Spirit revealed this mystery to the Apostles, by leading them into the perfect knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. The evangelical histories prove that this was really the case ; and that the Holy Ghost led the Apostles into this knowledge of the mystery of Christ, in the understanding of the scriptures, by slow advances, and by external means of information, and not by any direct and immediate inspiration.

But it must be further remarked, there is no evidence that the word *Spirit* in this passage, *Ephes. iii. 5.* means the Holy Ghost. It is most probable that *Spirit*, here, means exactly the same as in *Rom. viii. 9.* “ Ye are not in the *flesh*, “ but in the *spirit* ;” *ἐν πνεύματι*, in both passages. “ Ye are not under the *law*, but under “ *grace*,” words of the same import—Ye are not in the *flesh*, under the discipline of the carnal dispensation, which was merely a *type*, an *external form* and *shadow* of good things to come ; but ye are in the *spirit*, under the Christian dispensation, which is altogether spiritual ; in which ye have not the mere form of knowledge and of the truth, but a plain revelation of the very truth itself, that now ye might serve in newness of the *spirit*, and not in oldness of the *letter*. This, therefore, is the very character of Christ’s disciples : *We worship*
God

God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; that is, in the Law, and the services thereof, which were the body, of which Christianity is the soul. When, therefore, St. Paul said, *Ephes. iii. 5.* The mystery of Christ is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets, or teachers, *ἐν πνεύματι*, *in the spirit*, he meant nothing more than *under the present dispensation*, in contradistinction to the legal.

The Law and the Prophets prophesied until *John*. From that time the kingdom of God was *preached*, openly declared, and had its beginning; and is now supported, and carried on, under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Under this dispensation, whatever means were used, or still are used; whether miracles, the gift of healing, the gift of tongues, of prophecy, or visions; the sending ministers to one place or another, to Cæsarea, to Seleucia, to Antioch, into Macedonia, and not into Bithynia; the united testimony of the saints, their invincible patience and exemplary conduct, study, learning, elocution; these being all under the direction of the Spirit, and means deriving all their virtue from the effectual working of his power, the effects produced by them, in enlightening the minds and sanctifying the hearts of men, are all attributed to him. By the conversion of a Roman centurion,

centurion, and by various circumstances which accompanied it, St. Peter and others were led into the knowledge of the mystery of Christ. By the personal appearance of Christ, by the voice of his mouth, and by other providential interpositions, Saul of Tarsus became a convert to the faith, and the most enlightened Apostle of the Gentiles. These were the means :—and yet it was by the Spirit as the agent and power working by these means, which revealed the mystery of Christ to St. Peter and St. Paul, and other apostolical men, in the clear and perfect understanding of the prophetical scriptures.

Separating the work of the Spirit from the means by which he works ; imagining that the Spirit works, or may work without means ; and that means are, or may be, without the Spirit—have been the occasion of many other great and dangerous errors. There never was an opinion more inconsistent with the present state and condition of men in this world, or more inconsistent with the dispensation of the grace of God.

The gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was a gift bestowed on the whole Christian church, the benefit of which descends, and will descend, like the holy anointing oil poured on Aaron's head, to every member of the church, to the remotest ages. The church is one, how-
ever

ever extended; no time nor circumstances can divide it. It was by the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost that Christianity has been planted in Britain. It was, and is, by the same Spirit, whatever means intervened, or are used, that any one of us at this time knows any thing of the one living and true God, and of Jesus Christ, or has any hope of a resurrection from the dead and of life everlasting. It is by the Spirit that Christianity continues to have at this day any existence, even in form and name, in this land. It is in and by the Spirit that any child partakes of baptismal regeneration, or that any adult participates the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; and that he has ever read one chapter in the bible, or heard a sermon in the church; or has ever felt one holy compunction of spirit, or one sincere desire after God and his salvation. The perfect Christian is altogether the divine work of the Spirit of God; and yet all that work has been accomplished by means, and in the use and exercise of the natural faculties of that Christian's body and mind. These are things which God, in his wisdom, and providence and grace, hath joined together; and let not the foolish wit of man divide and disunite them, either in word, or doctrine, or practice.

THE END.

(27)
By the Author of this Dissertation, and shortly
to be published,

A VIEW OF THE UNITY OF DESIGN
AND
HARMONY OF DOCTRINE
IN THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

To excite attention to the Holy Scriptures ;
to persuade the mere English Scholar to study
them in the English Version ; to encourage the
hope of acquiring, by the diligent use of a trans-
lation, all the general and most important ad-
vantages which the original Scriptures were de-
signed to communicate ; to assist the Student in
searching the Scriptures, and to point out the
best method of studying them—These are the
ends proposed in offering this work to the ac-
ceptance of the English Reader, and to all who
have not sufficient abilities to study the Scrip-
tures in the original languages.

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THE END

